

Manotux Skin Test-Positive Result

Last Revised: 04/17/2001

Tuberculin Skin Test ---Results: Positive

1. What does a positive tuberculin reaction mean?

A positive reaction means that the person has TB germs somewhere in the body. The person has infection but not necessarily the disease.

2. How can a person be infected and not have TB disease?

After TB germs enter the body, in most cases, body defenses control the germs by building a wall around them. The germs can stay alive inside these walls for years in an "inactive" (latent) state. While TB germs are inactive, they can't harm the person and they can't spread to other people. The person is infected but not sick.

3. What is TB disease?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious illness caused by active TB germs. It is possible to get TB disease shortly after the germs enter the body if body defenses are weak. It is also possible, even after many years, for inactive TB germs to become active when body defenses are weakened. This may be due to aging, a serious illness, drug or alcohol abuse, or HIV infection (the virus that causes AIDS). When defenses are weakened and inactive TB germs become active, the germs can then break out of the walls, begin to multiply and damage the lungs or other body organs. This causes symptoms that may include a lasting cough, fatigue, coughing up blood, fever, loss of appetite and weight loss. There may be chest pain and night sweats. TB disease can be spread to other people.

4. How are TB germs spread?

TB can be spread by people with active disease who release the bacteria (germs) into the air by coughing, sneezing, laughing, singing or speaking forcefully. The tiny, invisible moisture droplets travel through the air and are breathed in by another person. TB is most commonly spread to people in confined, poorly ventilated spaces. It usually takes a prolonged exposure.

5. What's next? How does a person know if they have infection or disease?

A chest x-ray is necessary to see if the germs have started to damage the lungs. A medical evaluation is also necessary to assess for TB outside of the lungs. If the x-ray is normal and there are no symptoms, the TB germs are probably inactive and TB disease is not present. If the x-ray is abnormal or symptoms are present, additional tests will be needed.

In order to protect an infected person from getting TB disease, the doctor may give the person medicine to take for a period of time.

This is Latent Tuberculosis Infection Treatment

Medicine is given depending on the infected person's age and risk of developing active disease.

6. Tell me more about these risk factors and age groups used to determine preventive therapy recommendations. . .

Isoniazid (INH) is the antibiotic proven to reduce the risk of TB infection progressing to TB disease in the future. It means taking one small pill per day, taken consistently for six to twelve months. Generally, INH preventive medication is recommended for the following persons:

- Anyone under 35 years old.
- Persons over 35 years old with a special risk factor:

- a. Known recent infection (within two years)
- b. Known close contact to TB disease
- c. Evidence of "Old TB" on chest x-ray
- d. Other medical problems that lower resistance to TB--diabetes, silicosis, end stage renal disease, cortisone treatment, known or suspected HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, gastrectomy and certain cancers.

7. Why is prevention important?

Although only about one person in ten with a positive PPD skin test ever develops TB disease, the risk is lifelong. The symptoms of TB are common to many other illnesses. Without INH treatment, any cold or cough that lasts longer than usual could be a sign of TB disease. It may be weeks or months before a person sees their doctor and TB is diagnosed. In the meantime, they may infect those with whom they live and work. Small children are especially likely to develop serious TB disease. TB prevention is important for a person's own health and for the health of others.

8. How does INH attack TB germs?

INH fights TB germs in two ways: 1. INH stops TB germs from growing and 2. INH reduces the number of TB germs.

9. When should a positive reactor have another skin test?

If the tuberculin test reading was over 10mm, do not retest. Once a positive reactor, always a positive reactor. INH will not change the reaction.

10. What about chest x-rays for those with a positive tuberculin reaction?

X-rays are recommended for the initial evaluation and when persistent chest symptoms occur. It may be required to repeat a chest x-ray prior to certain types of employment. Thereafter, in lieu of testing a symptom review is recommended. You should contact your physician if the following symptoms occur: persistent cough, bloody sputum, night sweats, fever, or unexplained weight loss.

Remember: If you do not take preventive therapy to always

"THINK TB"